

Application Serial No. 10/042,835
Reply to Office Action Dated October 7, 2003

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A plurality of multi-layered non-puffed laminated cereal pieces, each piece comprising:

A. from 4 to 20 non-puffed cereal layers wherein each layer:

- 1) being fabricated from a cooked cereal dough,
- 2) having a thickness of about 100 to 500 micrometers,

wherein a quantity of said pieces having:

- a piece count ranging from about 6 to 20 per 10g
- a bulk density of about 0.06 to 0.4g/cc., and
- a moisture content of <6%,

wherein one cereal layer forms a first major exterior face and a second cereal layer forms an opposing second major exterior face, with each of the one and second cereal layers being fabricated from a continuous sheet layer while multiple intermediate layers are each fabricated from at least two flakes wherein at least a portion of at least one intermediate dough layer is delaminatable from an adjacent layer.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) The multi-layered cereal piece of claim 2 A plurality of multi-layered non-puffed laminated cereal pieces, each piece comprising:

A. from 4 to 20 non-puffed cereal layers wherein each layer:

- 1) being fabricated from a cooked cereal dough,
- 2) having a thickness of about 100 to 500 micrometers,

wherein a quantity of said pieces having:

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a piece count ranging from about 6 to 20 per 10g
a bulk density of about 0.06 to 0.4g/cc., and
a moisture content of <6%, wherein at least one layer is fabricated from a
continuous sheet and at least one layer is fabricated from at least two flakes.

4. (currently amended) The multi-layered cereal piece of ~~claim 2~~ claim 3 wherein one cereal layer forms a first major exterior face and a second cereal layer forms an opposed second major exterior face.
5. (canceled)
6. (canceled)
7. (currently amended) The multi-layered R-T-E cereal piece of ~~claim 6~~ claim 1 further including a topical coating.
8. (original) The multi-layered R-T-E cereal piece of claim 7 further including a fruit paste layer intermediate at least two dough layers.
9. (currently amended) The multi-layered R-T-E cereal piece of ~~claim 2~~ claim 3 wherein the piece further includes at least one layer of a non-cereal material intermediate at least two cereal dough layers.
10. (currently amended) The multi-layered R-T-E cereal piece of ~~claim 2~~ claim 3 wherein at least one layer comprises a whole grain based cooked cereal dough.
11. (previously amended) A method for preparing non-puffed multi-layered cereal pieces comprising the steps of:
 - A. providing a compressed laminated cereal dough bed or mass having a multiplicity of distinct horizontally extending parallel thin layers each fabricated from a cooked cereal dough,

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wherein the cereal dough bed or mass has

a cumulative thickness of the layers ranges from about 10mm to 25 mm;
a temperature of about 20 °C to about 45 °C, and,
a moisture content of about 15-20%;

- B. forming the compressed cereal dough bed or mass into pieces;
- C. drying the pieces to a moisture content of about less than 6% to form dried laminated cereal pieces.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein in Step A each layer ranges in thickness from about 100-500 micrometers.

13. (previously amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the compressed bed has a cumulative bed thickness of 10-15 mm.

14. (original) The method of claim 13 wherein at least one cereal dough layer is of a different color or composition.

15. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein at least one layer comprises a whole grain based cooked cereal dough.

16. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein in Step B the pieces each range from about 0.5-5g.

17. (original) The method of claim 16 wherein the bed is free of a sugar syrup binder.

18. (previously amended) The method of claim 17 further comprising the step of:

- D. providing the cereal pieces with a topical coating.

19. (previously amended) The method of claim 11 wherein Step A comprises the sub-steps of:

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- A1. providing a multiplicity of at least five layers of separate thin sheets of semi-moist cooked cereal doughs, or layers of individual flakes having an initial thickness, and
- A2. compressively layering the separate sheets or flake layers to form a single continuous compressed mass having a compressed thickness whereby the layers are bonded together.
20. (original) The method of claim 15 wherein in Step A the sheet further includes at least one layer of a non-cereal material intermediate at least two cereal dough layers.
21. (previously amended) The method of claim 20 wherein in Step A all layers are provided by a quantity of thin flakes.
22. (original) The method of claim 21 wherein at least one dough sheet or layer of flakes is fabricated from a whole grain cooked cereal dough selected from the group consisting of wheat, rice, corn, oats and barley.
23. (original) The method of claim 22 wherein at least one cooked cereal dough layer or layer of flakes comprises a whole wheat based cooked cereal dough.
24. (previously amended) The method of claim 18 comprises the sub-steps of:
- D1. applying a first liquid or binder base coating to the cereal pieces to form a base coated laminated cereal pieces, and,
- D2. applying a particulate top coating to the base coated laminated cereal pieces to form a topically coated laminated cereal piece.
25. (original) The method of claim 24 wherein the weight ratio of laminated cereal pieces to topical coating ranges from about 1-20:1.

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26. (previously amended) The method of claim 25 wherein in Step D2, at least a portion of the particulate top coating is supplied by ground sucrose.
27. (previously amended) The method of claim 26 wherein Step D2 at least a portion of the particulate top coating is supplied by ground cinnamon.
28. (previously amended) The method of claim 18 wherein step D includes:
providing the cereal pieces with a pre-sweetening coating.
29. (original) The method of claim 28 wherein step D comprises: coating the cereal pieces with a sugar syrup or slurry coating solution to form coated cereal pieces, drying the coated cereal pieces to a moisture content of less than 6%.
30. (original) The method of claim 14 wherein Step A comprises the sub-steps of:
A1. providing at least four workable cooked dough sheets to form aligned a top, a bottom and two intermediate layers, and
A2. forming the dough sheets into a single laminated sheet having at least four distinct plies adhered to at least a portion of each other.
31. (original) The method of claim 20 wherein in Step A the dough bed or mass further includes particulates of a non-cereal material intermediate at least two cereal dough layers.
32. (original) The method of claim 31 wherein the non-cereal particulate material includes a blend of powdered sugar and cinnamon.
33. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein at least one layer comprises a whole wheat based cooked cereal dough.
34. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein at least one layer comprises a corn based cooked cereal dough.

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35. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein in step A2 the compressed thickness ranges from about from about 35 to 65% of the initial thickness.
36. (original) The method of claim 35 wherein the compressed thickness ranges from about 10-25mm.
37. (original) The method of claim 36 wherein in Step A2 is practiced at compression pressures ranging from about 6 to 300 kPa.
38. (original) The method of claim 37 wherein the compressed bed comprises about 8-12 layers of cereal dough layers.
39. (original) The method of claim 38 further including adding a fruit paste layer intermediate at least two dough layers.
40. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 11.
41. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 12.
42. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 13.
43. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 14.
44. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 15.
45. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 20.
46. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 25.
47. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 30.

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48. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 35.

49. (original) A multi-layered cereal piece prepared according to the method of claim 39.

50. (previously amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the steps A-C are practiced in sequential order.